



United States Attorney's Office
District of Arizona



United States Secret Service

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2007

For Information Contact
WYN HORNBUCKLE
Telephone: (602) 514-7573
Cell: (602) 740-2422

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS ATTEND TRAINING TO PREVENT TARGETED VIOLENCE ON SCHOOL CAMPUSES

MESA, Ariz. – Since the horrific attack by students at Columbine High School in 1999, Americans have become all too familiar with school shooting incidents, from Jonesboro, Arkansas to Red Lake, Minnesota, and most recently the worst such recorded incident in U.S. history at the Virginia Tech Campus, where one gunman killed 32 students and faculty and wounded dozens before killing himself.

With the aim of preventing such attacks by arming school and public safety officials with the information to help them plan strategies, the Phoenix Field Office of the U.S. Secret Service and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona co-sponsored the "Safe Schools Initiative" training seminar, hosted by the City of Mesa Public Safety Training Facility.

"The study is the result of applying U.S. Secret Service methodologies for evaluating threats against the President and other heads of state," said Kenneth Huffer, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service Phoenix Field Office. "The Service conducted interviews with student aggressors, peers and teaching staff to support its assessment."

Over 350 school and law enforcement officials attended the training presentation, based on the 2002 report by the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center and the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free Schools Program. The 2002 report looks at data from 25 years of shooting incidents on school campuses in the United States. U.S. Secret Service Threat Assessment Specialist Megan K. Williams and retired New Bedford Massachusetts Police Chief Arthur J. Kelley presented the training Wednesday morning.

In a special afternoon session, former Minnesota U.S. Attorney Thomas Heffelfinger joined with Minnesota FBI Special Agent and Media Coordinator Paul McCabe to present a lessons learned seminar on the 2005 shootings in Red Lake, Minnesota, where a student killed two of his grandparents before going to his high school and killing four students, a teacher, and a school security officer before killing himself.

"There must be no worse nightmare imaginable for a parent, a teacher or principal, or law enforcement officer than responding to a school shooting or an act of violence on campus," said First Assistant United States Attorney Ann Harwood, in opening remarks at the conference. First Assistant Harwood continued..."As we have seen too many times in recent history, this kind of

-MORE-

tragedy is no longer an aberration. We're very fortunate today to introduce a curriculum to help us understand the concept of targeted violence, current approaches to evaluating the risk for such violence, so that we can better work together to create strategies to prevent such violence from happening in our schools."

This seminar was previously hosted by the Mesa Police Department in 2003.

RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-198(Safe Schools Initiative)

#